**06 The Media**

Print It and Get Going

**Study on the Go**

Print out these study cards and take them with you. It's the perfect way to get that last minute cramming session in before your exam.

[Print](http://thethinkspot.com/system/pdf/ThinkSpot-american-gov-2010-chapter06.pdf)

No politician uses technology more effectively than Barack Obama.

**The Media and Public Policy**

**Agenda Building**

* The media may be unable to tell people what to think, but they generally succeed in telling people what to think about. In early 2007, the Washington Post published a series of stories about the poor quality of care injured service personnel had been receiving from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. Other media outlets quickly picked up on the coverage and the issue of medical care for Iraq war veterans soon rose to the forefront of the policy agenda. Several congressional committees held hearings on the issue, the Bush administration called for an investigation, and the Secretary of Defense removed the military commanders in charge of veterans’ care at Walter Reed.

**Policy Formulation and Adoption**

* The media play an indirect role in policy formulation and adoption. The way the media present an issue helps define the approaches that policymakers will take to its resolution. The vivid images of flooded homes and people seeking shelter in the New Orleans Superdome along with accounts of bureaucratic bungling ensured that policymakers would regard Hurricane Katrina as not just a natural disaster but also the failure of the government to respond effectively to a crisis.
* The media do not adopt policies, but they do publicize policy adoption by reporting on acts of Congress, Supreme Court decisions, and presidential actions. The press also provides political leaders with a means to communicate with the public to explain government policies and ask for support.

**Policy Implementation and Evaluation**

* The media have a larger role in policy evaluation than policy implementation. Media outlets have issued empirical analyses of government programs and activities, including investigative reports on the conduct of the War in Iraq, the implementation of the Medicare prescription drug program, and the effectiveness of airport luggage screening.
* The media also offer a broad spectrum of normative policy evaluations, ranging from newspaper editorials to radio talk show commentaries and blog postings. Media policy evaluations often set the agenda for policy modifications and the adoption of new policies.

**Key Terms**

**Attack Journalism**

an approach to news reporting in which journalists take an adversarial attitude toward candidates and elected officials

**Broadcast Media**

television, radio, and the Internet

**Empirical Analysis**

a method of study that relies on experience and scientific observation

**Framing**

the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy

**Incumbent**

current officeholder

**New Media**

a term used to refer to alternative media sources, such as the Internet, cable television, and satellite radio Normative Analysis a method of study that is based on certain values

**Objective Journalism**

a style of news reporting that focuses on facts rather than opinion, and presents all sides of controversial issues

**Print Media**

newspapers and magazines

**Signaling Role**

a term that refers to the accepted responsibility of the media to alert the public to important developments as they happen

**Sound Bite**

a short phrase taken from a candidate's speech by the news media for use on newscasts

**Weblog Or Blog**

an online personal journal or newsletter that is regularly updated

**Discussion Questions**

1. Should the federal government regulate content on the Internet the way it regulates content broadcast over the public airways?

2. Do you feel the media are biased? In what ways?

3. What types of speech are not protected by the First Amendment?

4. What are some of the ways that the campaigns of the 2008 presidential candidates tried to manipulate the way the press covered their candidates?

5. What is the difference between empirical and normative analysis?

**Interactive Activity**

**Debate: Media Bias**

People have complained about media bias since the earliest days of the United States. Today, people often debate whether there is a liberal or conservative bias in the media, but there are other forms of media bias, and there are many ways in which bias can enter into media coverage. In this debate activity, you will review both sides of the debate over media bias and then take and defend a position of your own. What are the sources of bias in the media? Does media bias matter? Does media bias improve or harm the political debate in America?

[View Debate](http://www.ablongman.com/cmsredirects/long_mypoliscilab_2009/deb.mediabias.html)

**“Talking About American Government” Podcasts**

Author Neal Tannahill discusses the most important concepts in this chapter

Podcasts to come – please check back soon!